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Labor INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Plan Safety Aid for 12,500,000 Workers

In-plant training courses for 625,000 foremen to improve safety conditions for over 12,500,000 war production workers are now being conducted under the sponsorship of the U. S. Department of Labor and the Federal Office of Education. They are directed by many of the 40,000 war plant supervisors who have completed safety training courses conducted in 116 engineering colleges.

"When the defense program got under way three years ago we in the United States Department of Labor knew the Nation lacked trained safety engineers," Secretary Perkins said. "So we set up college courses in industrial safety for the initial training of supervisory production men. Much of the instruction was given by more than 600 special agents of the U. S. Department of Labor, all of whom are trained safety engineers who donate 20 percent of their time to the Government for such work.

"The new program of foremen safety training represents a fundamental shift in emphasis and a step on the way to ultimate on-the-job safety knowledge for 12,500,000 workers in war industries."

Training will cover specific safety problems of the plant and industry. Special agents of the National Committee will assist supervisors in class instruction. Outlines, guides, text material, references, and supplementary bulletins have been prepared by the Labor Department's Division of Labor Standards.

Consultation service is also offered to smaller war plants by the special agents of the Department of Labor. Safety records of over 10,000 plants serviced by them last year show a marked reduction in accident frequency in 66 percent of the cases. More than a million man-days were saved to war production as a result of their efforts.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary

Committee Finds Living Cost Index Trustworthy

The cost of living index, compiled monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U. S. Department of Labor, was found "trustworthy" and "a satisfactory instrument for measuring * * * average movements in the retail prices of goods and services purchased by city workers" by a special committee of the American Statistical Association which investigated the index and has made public its report. The Committee, headed by Frederick C. Mills of Columbia University, was appointed last May, by E. A. Goldenweiser, President of the American Statistical Association, when Secretary Frances Perkins, at the request of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, suggested that a study of the index be undertaken by the Association.

The Committee reported that it "canvassed interested labor organizations, employees' associations, and consumer groups. Evidence on changes in living costs has been submitted to us by representatives of these groups and by governmental agencies. Special studies of food prices in cities throughout the country have been initiated by the Committee and conducted by agents of the Bureau of Labor Statistics under the supervision of committee representatives.

The Committee has examined specific criticisms that have been made of the Bureau's index and finds that:

1. Special studies made for the Committee "confirm the essential accuracy of the food prices reported to the Bureau."
2. "Food price reports from the retail stores included in the regular Bureau sample are representative of prices prevailing in stores patronized by wage earners * * * ."
3. "The Bureau does obtain above-ceiling prices charged in ordinary retail outlets * * * and these prices are included in the index * * *. It is not likely, however, that all such cases are reported to the Bureau * * *. For food products this error does not exceed 2 percent. Transactions in rationed foods effected without exchange of ration coupons are not and should not be represented in an official index of living costs."
4. "Consumers' goods and services, in the aggregate, have since 1939 suffered some loss of quality that is not reflected in reported prices. No dollar value can be put on this loss. In large part it is an intangible and immeasurable element in the cost of the war."
5. "The rents reported directly by tenants are free from bias and may be accepted as accurate."
6. "The sample of dwellings covered are satisfactory representations of family dwellings in the cities represented in the general index. * * * These 34 cities do not adequately represent the diversity of urban housing conditions in the country as a whole. We recommend * * * an increase in the coverage of the index."
7. "For the areas covered * * * the index of rents provides an acceptable measure of changes in the cost of housing for urban workers who live in the same communities and in residences of the same general type as those occupied before the war * * *."

The Committee points out that "many of the difficulties and doubts concerning the index have their origins in attempts to use it uncritically for purposes to which it is not adapted." "The index is designed to measure only those changes in family expenditures resulting from changes in unit prices. It is not designed to measure alterations in family expenditures resulting from changes in manner of living, whether the changes are due to choice or necessity. Such alterations can be measured only by other statistical devises, such as direct inquiry into family incomes and expenditures * * *. The distinction between changes in family expenditures due to price movements and those due to shifts in the way of living is of especial concern today * * *."

The Committee recommends an expansion in the coverage of the Bureau's indexes, subject to considerations of cost and the need of Congressional committees and administrators for more information on the cost of living. Separate indexes are recommended for different regions in the country, communities of different size, and certain specialized industrial areas. "The general index is a national average, and relates to large cities only. There is considerable variation in the level of living costs in different parts of the country, and in the degree of change in living costs in different regions. There are industrial variations in living costs. Costs in coal towns and textile towns are affected by special factors and have distinctive movements."

The Committee noted that there is at the present time no cost of living index for rural, nonfarm families and recommended that the interested Government agencies prepare indexes representing changes in cost of living of this group. They also recommended the development of measures of geographic differences in cost of living, and frequent small-sample studies of family expenditures.

In commenting on the report, Miss Perkins said, "We are gratified that the special committee headed by Dr. Mills, after its exhaustive investigation into the manner in which the index is compiled, has found it to be a trustworthy measure of changes in the prices paid by consumers for goods and services."

"As the report points out, much of the criticism which has been leveled at the index arises from a misunderstanding of its function. The index is a measure of changes in retail prices and rents paid by city families of moderate income. I am grateful to the members of the Committee for the painstaking manner in which they examined the method used in assembling prices and compiling the index. They were Dr. Frederick C. Mills of Columbia University, Chairman; Dr. E. Wight Bakke, Yale University; Dr. Reavis Cox, University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Margaret Reid, Iowa State College; Dr. Theodore W. Schultz, University of Chicago; and Dr. Samuel Stratton, President of Middlebury College. I am happy that they have found that the index is doing the job it was set up to do."

Task of Industrial Nurse Grows in Importance

Professional nurses were first employed by commercial establishments nearly 50 years ago. Their duties were to visit the sick in their homes. There are now about 15,000 industrial nurses in the United States and the number is growing. Very few years ago there were only about 3,000 full-time graduate registered nurses in industry. In addition, at that time, some visiting-nurse associations made contracts for part-time service, usually to small establishments which could not afford and did not need a full-time nurse. This is still done, and experiments are being made in cooperation among several small plants sharing medical services.

Medical departments in industrial plants began with the idea of controlling compensable accidents. Now the concept is rapidly changing to an emphasis on the health factors which condition the productivity of the worker. Anything that detracts from the worker's productive ability—poor health, fatigue, uncomfortable surroundings, and so on—must be eliminated if possible. Among industrial workers, however, the illnesses and injuries incurred on the job account for less than a tenth of total time lost from work as a result of disability.

A survey being carried on by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Industrial Hygiene gives some indication of the numbers of plants and workers with nursing and other medical services available. By the early summer of 1943, report had been made on more than 3,000 plants in 24 counties, employing nearly 238,000 women and 570,000 men. More than half the plants made either textiles and their products or metals and metal products, but all main industry groups were represented. Plants employing fewer than 25 workers were not included; many were very large companies.

Only about 8 percent of these plants furnished full-time nursing service; 2 percent had part-time service. Together these employed a little more than half the workers. In small plants nursing service was the exception. In establishments employing from 25 to 500, such service was available for little more than a tenth of the workers.

In surveys made in 1942 of nearly 1,000 plants chosen because they had some organized medical service it was found that all but 70 had full-time registered nurses, in the great majority of cases women. On the average, nurses served nearly 800 workers each. There was a tendency for nurses in the ordnance and chemical industries to have charge of fewer workers. Large plants in other fields averaged over 1,000 workers per full-time registered nurse. It is recommended by the Public Health Service that for maintenance of complete health service there should be one nurse for up to 300 employees, two or more nurses for up to 600 employees, three or more for up to 1,000.

Generally speaking, the industrial nurse must have excellent surgical skill. Now, in addition, there is a growing recognition of the fact that she should combine with this some of the skills of the Public Health nurse and learn how to make the best use of the facilities of the community.

Every industrial nurse should become familiar with the industrial processes in the plant, the occupational hazards and the various methods used for their control. In the small plant where little or no direct medical supervision exists, and where no engineering control program is in effect, a thorough sanitary survey can be undertaken by the nurse. Simple forms will enable her to make an intelligent sanitary survey, even though she may lack technical knowledge of medical and engineering phases of industrial hygiene. Frequently such a survey results in the elimination of sources of unpleasantness and ill health too often overlooked.

Besides nursing and first-aid work, the Public Health Service lists among the duties of the in-

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dustrial nurse participation in the medical-examination and the health-education programs, assistance with accident-control and safety-education programs, and assistance with plant sanitation.[1]

There are no full-time professional training courses especially qualifying graduate nurses for work as industrial nurses. A number of universities in various parts of the country have offered, especially since the outbreak of war, "refresher courses" for industrial nurses, usually meeting on an extension basis one night a week for a total of 16 to 32 hours. Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Western Reserve, Loyola, Chicago, Marquette, and a number of other universities with nursing schools have sponsored subject courses. In some cases management has been interested enough in increasing the efficiency of the employed nurse to pay tuition for these courses. The University of Washington and the University of California in Los Angeles have sponsored instruction courses for industrial nurses lasting not more than 3 weeks.

There is a professional organization of industrial nurses, formed about a year ago, called the American Association of Industrial Nurses, and wherever such a group is large enough in the town or the community, they are developing local organizations for study of their special problems. All industrial nurses belong to their State professional associations, and there is a tendency for them to become a distinct section of the State Nursing Association. Otherwise they are grouped with public-health nurses.

[1] *Manual of Industrial Hygiene and Medical Service in War Industries. Division of Industrial Hygiene, U. S. National Institute of Health, U. S. Public Health Service 1943. pp. 67, 68.*

War Plants Find Part-Time Jobs For Women

Part-time employment has been very unusual in factories in the past but is now being resorted to in many areas to meet the shortage of workers. Women with heavy home responsibilities are able in many cases to undertake part-time jobs though a full schedule would be out of the question.

Representatives of the Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, found that employers in localities where a woman-labor shortage exists were already employing women on "Victory" or short-time shifts. These shifts followed three general patterns: Short-hour or part-day shifts; shifts of approximately full daily length but covering only a half week or occurring on alternate days; week-end shifts. Of these, the short-hour shifts were by far the most common.

Short-hour or part-day shifts usually were 4 hours in length and were worked on 5 or 6 days a week, making a total weekly employment of 20 or 24 hours. A few shifts were 6 hours in length. No part-time employment on 7 consecutive days was reported.

In practically all plants visited, part-time workers had been employed only a few months, and hour schedules still were on a tentative or experimental basis. Some plants had only one part-time shift, with all part-time workers employed the same hours. Others had a number of different part-time shifts, arranged to suit the convenience of various groups of workers. A few plants teamed up part-time workers in pairs, so that one worker would be employed for the first half of a regular 8-hour shift, and her alternate would then come in and work the second half of the shift. In such cases the beginning hour of the first worker and the ending hour of the second worker coincided with the corresponding hours of the regular full-time shift.

Plants in general had no prevailing policy concerning the relation of their short-hour schedules to full-time schedules; some short-hour schedules overlapped, and others coincided with full-time schedules. One unusual arrangement was that in which the short-hour shift was used to keep the plant in operation by filling in the 4-hour stretch between two regular 10-hour shifts.

Shifts that occur during the morning or afternoon, conflicting less with family meals, usually are most convenient for women with heavy home responsibilities or with children of school age. One firm employing 400 part-time workers was adapting the work to "whatever hours the workers would come" and had adopted a wide variety of morning and afternoon shifts.

Late afternoon shifts usually were designed to attract high-school students. If the shift extends through the dinner hour it is not convenient for the homemaker. In a plant with two late-afternoon shifts, high-school girls were three-fourths of the workers on a 4-to-8 shift, while there was a large proportion of homemakers on a 3-to-7 shift.

Several plants had small groups of homemakers on evening shifts, an arrangement some women find convenient. Students and women with full-time jobs elsewhere also were employed, but the latter is opposed to the Women's Bureau standard of total worktime not in excess of 48 hours, especially since it takes time to get from one job to the other. No part-time women were found on the graveyard shift, though one plant was reported to be recruiting women to split such a shift. The Women's Bureau recommends that women should not be employed part time at night, as they must in addition perform their normal household duties in daytime in spite of broken rest.

As most shifts were only 4 hours in length, the question of a meal period usually did not arise. However, some plants had longer shifts that still were less than 8 hours. In one plant women were working 6 hours with only a 5-minute rest; this is too long a stretch. Moreover, part-time shifts that begin and end at odd hours give little opportunity for a full meal either just before or just after the shift. The Women's Bureau recommends that women on shifts of more than 5 hours should be allowed a regular lunch period of at least 30 minutes. Where the shift is 4 hours or longer there should be a rest period of at least 10 minutes midway through the shift.

Part-time shifts employing women all day on 2 or 3 consecutive days or on alternate days were found in some plants. Employers stated that most of these workers were homemakers with families, chiefly older women. In one plant women were working daily from 9 to 4, one and one-half hours less than the regular shift. This enabled them to get their children off to school before coming to work. Some plants working on a continuous 24-hour 7-day basis were using full-day part-time workers to take the places of regular women workers on their days off.

A few firms have organized shifts on which workers are employed either for week ends only or, in some cases, all day Sunday and 2 or 3 evenings during the week. Part-time workers are sometimes employed on week-end shifts to take the places of full-time workers on their regular day off. Part-time week-end shifts are composed chiefly of white-collar workers and others with full-time jobs elsewhere who are willing to do extra work in "spare-time" hours. Some homemakers also find week-end shifts convenient, as they can leave the children with their husbands on the latter's one day off.

Employment on their weekly day off of women employed a full week elsewhere defeats the purpose of part-time shifts; it impairs the worker's efficiency so that over a period of time she will produce less on both jobs. The Women's Bureau recommends that women should not be employed as part-time workers where such employment will necessitate their working 7 days and deprive them of their weekly day of rest.

Production jobs on which women part-time workers were most frequently employed were assembly, light machine work, inspecting, packing. Women part-time workers also performed such assorted machine and hand operations as the following: Filing, drilling, burring, hand milling, spline milling, electric soldering, and grinding.

The consensus of employers appeared to be that independence of work, though desirable, is not essential on part-time jobs. Several employers stated, however, that part-time workers would be employed most successfully on operations that are separate and complete in themselves rather than part of a continuous process.

In the plants visited by the Women's Bureau, practices in connection with wage rates usually were the same for part-time workers as for full-time workers. The beginning rates were the same for both and progression to higher rates occurred at similar intervals. Job rates were the same for both groups. Where a higher rate was paid for working on a less convenient shift, such as the evening or the night shift, the differential was in effect for part-time workers as well as for full-time. Though rates for both groups were the same throughout, part-time workers could not earn so much proportionately as full-time workers because their short hours eliminated premium pay.

A number of war plants from which information was obtained by Women's Bureau representatives in April 1943 employed women on a part-time basis for clerical work, both in the office and as timekeepers in the plant. Usually this work was of a simple or routine nature, such as the job of mail clerk or file clerk. It was considered impracticable to employ part-time workers on elaborate office machines, as it was necessary to get maximum service from such machines by using them continuously throughout the day. One firm, which employed chiefly high-school girls on the part-time shift, reported that they could not afford to let the machines lie idle during the morning. By putting on a morning part-time shift and employing workers in "teams," one girl on the first shift and the other on the second, it would be possible to use part-time workers on such machines throughout the day.

Part-time employment in trade and service industries is not new, but the war has given it a new usefulness. The fact that exceptionally large numbers of homemakers are now employed outside their homes makes the facilities offered by trade and service industries doubly important. At the same time, women seeking part-time work prefer it in war plants. The employment office in an eastern city had 600 unplaced applicants for part-time work who were reluctant to enter service industries.

One of the chief drawbacks to trade and service jobs is the relatively low pay. For example, a survey of laundries by the New York Department of Labor showed average hourly earnings of women and male minors in 1942 to be only 43 cents. Less than a fifth of them had earned as much as 50 cents. In contrast, the Women's Bureau found that in 132 war plants in New Jersey reporting on entrance rates, 87 in every 100 women paid by the hour usually earned 55 cents or more. Only 7½ percent were receiving less than 50 cents, only 1½ percent less than 45 cents, while more than half were paid at least 65 cents.

The part-time study of the Women's Bureau, titled *Part-Time Employment of Women in Wartime*, is issued as No. 13 of its series of special bulletins.

Munitions Plants Show Absenteeism Cut

Absence rates in June continued at about the same levels as in previous months according to a survey among 25 manufacturing industries conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Of these industries 13 reported reductions in absence rates between May and June, 9 reported increases, and 3 recorded no change. The petroleum refining, iron and steel, and explosives industries continued to report the lowest rates, in each case less than 3.5 percent. At the other extreme, the shipbuilding and airframes industries experienced absence rates of 8.1 and 7.2 percent respectively.

While improved over the May level, the June absence rate in bituminous coal mines remained higher than 8 percent. Absenteeism in anthracite and metal mines continued at about the same levels in most manufacturing industries.

Between March and May, continued significant reductions in absences were reported in the manufacture of firearms and metal-working machinery, and in each of these cases there was further improvement in June. In the anthracite and bituminous coal mining industries, a sharp increase in absenteeism between March and April, reflecting unsettled conditions, was counterbalanced by marked improvements between April and May, which continued into June. In none of the industries covered was there a substantial increase in absence rates during the period covered by the identical-plant group comparisons.

In most of the industries covered the proportion of women employed increased significantly between March and May.

Employment and Weekly Pay Rolls

The total number of employees in nonagricultural establishments was 38,295,000 in August 1943. This level of employment, although 88,000 less than in July, was nevertheless almost 500,000 above August 1942. With the exception of manufacturing, all the industry divisions contributed to the decline over the month. The increase in manufacturing reflects the expansion in war production employment. (These figures exclude proprietors of unincorporated businesses, self-employed persons, domestics employed in private homes, public emergency employees, and personnel in the armed forces.)

MANUFACTURING

The increase of 29,000 wage earners in the durable goods group of manufacturing industries and the decline of 9,000 in the nondurable group resulted in a net increase of 20,000 wage earners in all manufacturing industries between July and August. Among the durable goods groups, the only sizeable changes in employment occurred in the transportation equipment and automobile groups. Considerable expansion in the aircraft industry, which was only partially offset by declines in shipbuilding employment, resulted in an increase of 9,000 wage earners in the transportation equipment group. The increase of 24,000 wage earners in the automobile group also reflects the further expansion of the aircraft industry as well as increased employment in the production of other war material. (The automobile industry converted to the production of war goods in 1941 and 1942 and is now on a complete wartime footing.)

Among the nondurable groups, only the food group showed a sizeable increase in employment. A seasonal increase in the canning industry and a contraseasonal increase in slaughtering and meat packing raised employment in the food group to 1,033,000 wage earners, 17,000 above July. The leather, chemical, and textile groups, with employment declines of 5,000, 8,000, and 13,000, respectively, were responsible for the decline in nondurable employment.

Weekly earnings in all manufacturing industries averaged $42.76 in July as compared with $43.35 in June. The decrease in weekly earnings was due to a decline of .8 of an hour in the workweek, occasioned by the Independence Day holiday.

NONMANUFACTURING

Employment in bituminous coal mining and metal mining were each 13 percent below the level in August 1942. The bituminous coal mining industry employed only 378,000 wage earners in August 1943 as compared with 435,000 in August 1942. Although each of the components of the metal mining group employed fewer wage earners in August 1943 than a year ago, the decline of 10,600 wage earners in gold and silver mining was primarily responsible for reducing employment in this group by 13,800.

Estimated number of wage earners and average weekly earnings in manufacturing industries by major industry groups

[Adjusted to Bureau of Employment Security final data for 1941 and preliminary data for the second quarter of 1942]

Industry group	Estimated number of wage earners (thousands)			Average weekly earnings		
	August 1943	July 1943	August 1942	July 1943	June 1943	July 1942
	(Preliminary)					
ALL MANUFACTURING	13,915	13,895	12,869	$42.76	$43.35	$36.43
Durable goods	*8,315*	*8,286*	*7,192*	*48.81*	*49.33*	*42.51*
Iron and steel and their products	1,709	1,711	1,620	47.27	48.08	40.16
Electrical machinery	707	709	564	44.72	45.59	41.72
Machinery, except electrical	1,247	1,246	1,114	51.14	52.27	47.04
Transportation equipment, except automobiles	2,319	2,310	1,673	55.90	55.84	51.86
Automobiles	718	694	534	57.18	57.10	50.98
Nonferrous metals and their products	414	414	387	47.03	47.51	40.94
Lumber and timber basic products	481	484	561	31.51	32.78	26.98
Furniture and finished lumber products	360	360	369	32.36	33.05	26.95
Stone, clay, and glass products	360	358	370	35.40	36.29	30.54
Nondurable goods	*5,600*	*5,609*	*5,677*	*34.01*	*34.41*	*28.94*
Textile mill products and other fiber manufactures	1,206	1,219	1,283	27.16	27.66	24.02
Apparel and other finished textile products	834	833	915	26.05	26.67	21.76
Leather and leather products	325	330	367	29.13	29.81	25.91
Food and kindred products	1,033	1,016	1,125	35.52	36.01	30.17
Tobacco manufactures	87	89	97	27.37	26.45	22.43
Paper and allied products	316	316	298	35.59	36.47	30.19
Printing, publishing, and allied industries	337	339	325	40.02	40.38	36.06
Chemicals and allied products	734	742	623	42.04	42.00	37.32
Products of petroleum and coal	126	126	129	51.73	51.21	40.73
Rubber products	193	192	158	45.00	47.10	39.05
Miscellaneous industries	409	407	357	40.17	40.97	33.53

Estimated number of wage earners and average weekly earnings in selected nonmanufacturing industries

Industry	Estimated number of wage earners (thousands)			Average weekly earnings		
	August 1943	July 1943	August 1942	July 1943	June 1943	July 1942
	(Preliminary)					
Anthracite mining	70.2	71.4	76.8	$39.69	$29.52	$32.09
Bituminous coal mining	378	379	435	42.76	31.92	32.18
Metalliferous mining	93.3	95.4	107.1	43.30	44.39	38.05
Iron	32.6	33.7	33.1	40.82	42.14	37.01
Copper	29.3	29.9	30.8	46.53	47.78	39.89
Lead and zinc	18.2	18.3	19.1	42.47	43.26	38.53
Gold and silver	6.4	6.7	17.0	39.69	41.48	34.43
Miscellaneous	6.8	6.8	7.1	45.52	45.66	37.19
Hotels (including salaried employees)	347	347	327	20.18	20.00	17.58
Power laundries	258	268	277	23.47	23.64	20.66
Dyeing and cleaning	80.3	84.5	82.9	27.55	28.61	24.04

The Cost of Living in August 1943

Fresh vegetable prices continued seasonally lower from mid-July to mid-August and resulted in the third consecutive monthly decline in the cost of living for city workers—a drop of one-half of one percent. Food prices as a group were down 1.3 percent and more than balanced smaller increases during the month for other goods and services.

Since the decline in food prices began in May, the average family food bill for staples has come down by 4.1 percent and the entire cost of living by 1.5 percent. The index now stands at 123.2 percent of its 1935-39 average.

Food prices are high, notwithstanding these summer declines. They averaged about 9 percent above last year and nearly 47 percent above the low levels prevailing just before the outbreak of war in Europe in August 1939. This August the sharp price declines for fresh fruits and vegetables averaged 7 percent, but they were considerably greater in some cities than in others. Cabbage, sweetpotatoes, apples, and green beans decreased in price from 15 to 25 percent over the month, and other vegetables showed smaller reductions. Despite these declines, vegetable prices remained at comparatively high levels, about 33 percent above last August and more than 90 percent above August 1939.

Aside from fresh produce, the most important declines in August were for fresh fish, which had been rising steadily to more than double pre-war levels. Under a new OPA ceiling regulation, there was a decline during the month of 3.5 percent. The cost of meats also decreased over the month, representing continued adjustments to an OPA "cutback" which reduced prices in the previous month. Egg prices showed a seasonal advance of 9 percent, and the cost of tea rose 4.6 percent.

Differences from city to city in food price changes were unusually great from July to August. In northern areas price reductions were especially large, amounting on the average to 2.3 percent in New York, 2.9 percent in Detroit, and 2.8 percent in Bridgeport and Denver. In many southern cities, because of the earlier growing season, prices had already begun to increase seasonally.

Living costs other than food increased moderately from July to August. Clothing prices rose 0.2 percent over the month. The disappearance of lower price lines of men's business shirts, undershirts and work shoes, women's percale wash frocks and girdles, and scattered increases in the cost of other clothing articles accounted for the increase from July 15 to August 15. Clearance sales were largely responsible for the decline in the cost of men's summer-weight suits and straw hats.

Housefurnishings costs advanced 0.1 percent on the average from July to August, due to increases of 0.3 percent in the cost of Axminster rugs, inexpensive living-room and medium-priced bedroom suites, and cook stoves. Fuel, electricity, and ice costs also increased 0.1 percent, as a result of small advances in the cost of lignite, coal, coke, and ice.

Miscellaneous goods and services rose 0.3 percent over the month. Medical and dental services, hospital charges, motion-picture admissions, beauty and barber shop services, laundry soap and cigarettes all increased slightly from July 15 to August 15.

Rental charges are collected at the quarterly periods March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15 and have shown little change for some time.

Cost of living in 21 large cities

Area and City	Index as of August 15, 1943 (1935-39=100)	Percent of change from— July 15, 1943, to Aug. 15, 1943	Aug. 15, 1942, to Aug. 15, 1943	Aug. 15 1939, to Aug. 15, 1943
Average: Large cities	[1] **123.2**	[1] **—0.5**	**+4.9**	**+24.9**
North Atlantic:				
Boston	119.9	—.2	+4.0	+23.5
Buffalo	125.3	—.6	+4.0	+27.2
New York	122.6	[2] —.8	+5.5	+23.8
Philadelphia	122.5	—.1	+5.0	+25.3
Pittsburgh	123.6	[3] —.2	+5.9	+25.6
South Atlantic:				
Baltimore	125.4	—.4	+5.3	+27.1
Savannah	131.9	—.2	+8.5	+32.8
Washington, D. C.	122.7	—.2	+5.0	+24.4
North Central:				
Chicago	122.7	[4] —.2	+4.5	+24.3
Cincinnati	123.8	[5] —.1	+5.5	+27.2
Cleveland	127.8	+.1	+7.5	+27.8
Detroit	124.6	—1.1	+5.6	+26.5
Kansas City	120.7	0	+5.0	+22.4
Minneapolis	120.8	—.2	+3.8	+21.2
St. Louis	122.6	—.4	+4.4	+25.0
South Central:				
Birmingham	126.4	+.2	+6.4	+28.3
Houston	122.1	—.3	+3.8	+21.3
Western:				
Denver	121.0	—1.3	+4.0	+22.7
Los Angeles	124.5	—.4	+2.7	+23.9
San Francisco	124.3	[5] —.8	+3.9	+25.2
Seattle	125.8	—.3	+3.4	+25.4

[1] Rents surveyed at quarterly intervals, March 15, June 15, Sept. 15, Dec. 15.
[2] Index for July revised—All items 123.6 food 140.5.
[3] Index for July revised—All items 123.8 food 138.9.
[4] Index for July revised—All items 123.0 food 137.1.
[5] Index for July revised—All items 123.9 food 137.9.
[6] Index for July revised—All items 125.3 food 140.0.

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